

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

BAND-TAILED PIGEON

Patagioenas fasciata

Family: COLUMBIDAE

Order: COLUMBIFORMES

Class: AVES

B251

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Common resident in hardwood and hardwood-conifer habitats, and in coniferous habitats east of the Sierra Nevada-Cascade crest. Inhabits lower slopes of major mountain ranges of the state (excluding the desert ranges); also occurs in wooded coastal zone. Especially gregarious in winter; flocks range widely in search of an abundant food source. Closely associated with oaks and acorns. Adapted locally to heavily planted residential areas where oaks are present (Garrett and Dunn 1981). Occasionally winters on the larger Channel Islands (Garrett and Dunn 1981), and is a regular spring and fall migrant on the South Farallon Islands (DeSante and Ainley 1980).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Feeds on acorns, fruits of madrone, dogwood, cascara, elderberry, salmonberry, salal, grape, huckleberry, manzanita, and hawthorn; oak and madrone blossoms, green shoots, grains, and cultivated and ornamental fruits and nuts. Picks food from ground and plucks from trees. For more details see Smith (1968) and Grenfell et al. (1980).

Cover: Oak and oak-conifer woodlands near a good water source provide optimum cover. Cover also is provided by riparian hardwood habitats and conifer forests.

Reproduction: Nest is an open platform of twigs in a tree, usually 6-11 m (20-35 ft) above the ground, but ranging from 2-51 m (6-167 ft). Commonly nests in areas of thick cover such as alder thickets or groves of conifers or oaks. Nests near water, and requires a tree taller than canopy within territory as a cooing perch and for display flights.

Water: Drinks at least twice a day from a source near the center of activity. Seeks out mineral water from traditional springs.

Pattern: Prefers large trees and multi-layered forests with a light understory and open to medium canopy. Dense thickets often used for breeding. Sometimes feeds in sparse woodland.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Resident; winter numbers augmented by migrants from Oregon (Gabrielson and Jewett 1940), and some California breeders winter in Mexico (Leopold 1959). Numbers fluctuate locally depending on weather and food availability. In general, moves upslope in summer and downslope in winter in major mountain ranges.

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: In Humboldt Co., breeding territory radius around nest estimated to be 0.2 to 0.8 km (0.1 to 0.5 mi), averaging 0.4 km (0.25 mi) (Glover 1953a). In Contra Costa Co., Peeters (1962) estimated that nesting territory ranged from about 0.8 to 1.6 ha (2-4 ac).

Reproduction: Breeds monogamously, from February to mid-October, with peak in May. Occasionally up to 3 broods. Usually lays 1 egg per clutch, sometimes 2. Incubation by female and male for 18-20 days (Harrison 1978). In New Mexico, evidence of colonial nesting reported (Neff 1947). Young fed crop milk by parents initially.

Niche: Preyed upon by peregrine falcon, and occasionally by other raptors. Weather affects distribution locally. A small percentage of the state's population is taken by hunters each year.

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